DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 334 675 EA 023 156

AUTHOR Keedy, John L.
TITLE Teacher Collegial Groups as a Teacher Self-Improvement Strategy: Implications for Instructional Supervisors.
PUB DATE Apr 91
NOTE 49p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, April 3-7, 1991).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Change Strategies; *Collegiality; Elementary Education; Learning Strategies; Meetings; Qualitative Research; *Self Help Programs; *Supervisors; *Teacher Improvement; *Teacher Participation; *Teacher Supervision; Teaching Conditions
IDENTIFIERS Professionalism; *School Culture

ABSTRACT

Given the current need for collegial interaction among teachers, a teacher collegial group (TCG) was designed and implemented as a participatory structure in an elementary school. An interpretive research design was used to: (1) identify interactions occurring among the six participating teachers during TCG meetings; (2) improve the TCG meeting format and process; and (3) explore whether teachers improved their instruction through their TCG participation. Data sources included teacher interviews, a pre- and post-questionnaire, meeting transcripts, journals, field notes, and meeting assessments. The prevalent interaction category was "advice/suggestions," as opposed to such categories as "critique" and "probing." A procedure was implemented to structure teacher presentations of their game plans. All six teachers incorporated new learning programs or strategies into their classrooms. Teachers followed the meeting format and TCG process, identified year-long foci, formulated game plans, and observed their TCG colleagues. Findings regarding teacher improvement were mixed. With judicious planning and district/school support, teacher collegial groups can offer instructional supervisors an efficient alternative strategy to classroom observation. Appendices contain TCG interaction categories, a sample teacher assessment form, a pretreatment TCG questionnaire, and a critique of this questionnaire. (23 references) (MLH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED334675

Teacher Collegial Groups as a Teacher Self-Improvement Strategy: Implications for Instructional Supervisors

John L. Keedy, Ed.D.
Education Center
West Georgia College
Carrollton, Georgia 30118
(404)836-6557

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Paper prepared for the annual meeting
of the American Educational Research Association
Chicago, Illinois, April 7, 1991

EA 023 156

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. L. Keedy

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Abstract

Given the current need for collegial interaction among teachers, a teacher collegial group (TCG) was designed and implemented as a participatory structure in an elementary school. An interpretive research design was used to: 1) identify interactions occuring among the six participating teachers during TCG meetings; 2) improve the TCG meeting format and process; and 3) explore whether teachers improved their instruction through their TCG participation. Data sources were: teacher interview, pre and post questionnaire, meeting transcripts, journals, field notes, and meeting assessments. The prevalent interaction category was Advice/Suggestions -- as opposed to categories such as Critique and Probing. A procedure was implemented to structure teacher presentations of their gameplans. All six teachers implemented new learning programs or strategies into their classrooms. Teachers followed the meeting format and TCG process (program fidelity): They identified year-long foci, formulated gameplans, and observed their TCG colleagues. Findings regarding teacher improvement, however, were mixed: An implication about the difficulty of supplanting traditional norms (cordiality and classroom isolation) with norms of group experimentation and collegiality was made. TCGs may be an efficient alternative strategy to classroom observation for instructional supervisors.

Instructional supervisors need to develop strategies for teacher improvement as alternatives to traditional classroom observation. This need has occurred because the broad role of supervisors has changed in several ways from its original role of "snoopervision". Supervision now is viewed as an instructional improvement process (Beach & Reinhartz, 1989). Second, instructional supervision has been recast as a function, not a title (Wiles and Bondi, 1980). All personnel working with teachers, such as principals, assistant principals, directors of instruction, instructional lead teachers, for the improvement of instruction performs instructional supervision. Therefore more personnel are involved in the instructional supervision process. Third, supervisors now are considered major gameplayers in school improvement: facilitating collective action and a cause beyond one's self among teachers (Glickman, 1990). In this process teachers and administrators within each school identify common goals and complement each other in working towards those common goals.

Fourth, research on school culture has implications for instructional supervision. Workplace culture now is perceived as interrelated to staff development and organization development, i.e., an institution's capacity or performance of continuous improvement (Little, 1989; Rosenholtz, 1989). Continuous, innovative, classroom oriented staff development helps build a workplace culture

(e.g., norms of collegiality and experimentation); a school's organization development potential is limited or enhanced by these two elements. Lieberman (1988) advocated building colleagueship among teachers who historically have been isolated from one another. As colleagues they can share common problems and collective solutions, help engineer a school structure permitting autonomy, flexibility, resopnsibility, and provide resources for teaching and learning. Lambert (1989) concluded that teachers must be involved in opportunities to inquire, criticize, and participate in the process of empowering the learner. Teachers like other professionals need opportunities to engage and practice collegiality and shared leadership. Lambert (1988) claimed that traditional staff development has perpetuated paternalistic schooling.

We need to engage teachers in a professional culture offering choice, responsibility, and authority. Supervisors are in an excellent position for helping set the norms of collegiality building and networking among teachers since they observe classroom teaching and should know their teachers' staff development preferences.

Study Questions and Project Purpose

Given this agenda for instructional improvement, supervisors might consider research-based, participatory

structures within which teachers can both build a shared culture and help each other improve instruction. This paper shares some field-based research on a model in which the norms of collegiality and experimentation are encouraged: the teacher collegial group (TCG). Three questions were investigated in this research: 1) What interactions comprise teacher collegial group meetings?:) How might the meeting format and/or group processes be improved to maximize teacher collegial group model effectiveness?: and 3) Did teachers-- as participants in teacher collegial groups--improve their instruction?

As a research and development project, a school (Temple Elementary School, Carroll County, Georgia) and a college (West Georgia College) collaborated on this project during the 1988-89 school year. Schools are busy places. Colleges/universities have the time to reflect and offer school improvement models (Goodlad, 1984) for schools to implement and adapt to their settings. The project director was also the group faciliatator and investigator.

What are Teacher Collegial Groups?

Based partly on Kelley's (1950) workshop learning, teacher collegial groups provide a school's teachers most committed to changing and improving their teaching an opportunity to be learners in the teaching process. Each teacher formulates a year-long focus for this nine-meeting

program. A primary-grade teacher might want to use less instructional time in reading groups and more whole-group instruction. A history teacher might want to use cooperative learning groups encouraging more student analysis of historical issues.

These teachers deliberate upon alternatives to established practice. Teachers become action researchers and try out their gameplans (strategies to improve upon their year-long focus). At each meeting teachers update group members on progress made on their gameplan established through group analysis, critique, and encouragement at the previous meeting. This collegial interaction results in the formulation of another gameplan that could be tested out for the next two or three weeks preceding the next meeting. As this cycle continues teachers become analysts, problem-solvers, and informal researchers of their own teaching styles. Group members learn both from this cycle of experimentation with different instructional strategies and from each other through group interaction. Experienced teachers collaborate on the renewal of their teaching by reflecting upon their work in the learning-teaching process.

Rationale for TCGs

Teachers have become socialized by classroom isolation (Joyce, Hersh, & McKibbin (1983) and by the traditional authoritarian, "top-down" approach of principals (Eubanks & Parish, 1987). Consequently, many teachers may have ceased

learning from each other and take little initiative in solving problems. Yet Clark, Lotto, and Astuto (1984) claimed that teachers learned best from each other--as opposed to professors, teacher trainers, and consultants.

Other researchers have called for the use of classrooms as laboratories for continual learning (Niles and Lalik, 1985; and Tom, 1985). Bruner (1986) and Walizer (1986) both concluded that consideration of individual teachers' thoughts and understandings was crucial in gaining informed interpretations of the practitioner's craft of teaching. Gage (1985) described teaching as a complex process requiring creativity, intuition, and the ability to improvise and perform. Teachers participating in TCGs have the opportunity to explain the context of their instructional decision-making during the lesson planning phase, the classroom teaching phase, and the post-teaching analysis phase preparatory to the next day's lesson planning cycle.

Research Methodology and Analysis

Methodolgy and analysis are explained below for all three questions.

Nature of This Study

This study was qualitative. Based on the literature and the embryonic field research describing teacher study groups (a term often used in the literature) the study assumed that use of teacher collegial groups could

contribute to the growing body of school improvement research. The clinical, in-depth approach replaces the statistical, quantitative design (teacher-student ratio, number of library books per student, etc.). One teacher collegial group was used.

Because it examined how teacher collegial groups can better be implemented in schools and what types of interactions might characterize TCGs, this study was a "naturalistic inquiry". Very little is known about how TCGs work and how specific teachers improve their instruction through participation in TCGs. The study does not purport to prove program effectiveness because the body of knowledge about TCGs offers few benchmarks to guide such a study. Campbell and Stanley (1963, p.6) defined the one-shot, exploratory case study as a "single group studied only once, subsequent to some agent or treatment presumed to cause change." As a school improvement study, data collected and analyzed can be used to better use TCGs to improve schools.

For Question #1 the six teachers were asked individually to list on Teacher Assessment forms significant interactions that had occurred during each meeting. These interactions were categorized by common characteristics (Spradley, 1979) and conceptual and categorical data systems (Shavelson & Stern, 1981). Teachers were interviewed to verify these data-generated categories (reliability estimate

of .83) For questions #2 and #3 participant observation and focused interviewing were used to collect the data. Erickson's triangulation of the data (1986) was used to analyze, synthesize, and interpret the data for congruency among data sources.

Question #2 data were: teacher assessments, meeting transcripts, field notes, pre-and-post treatment questionnaire (with items indexed to the literature on TCGs to establish content validity) and interview data. For question #3 data sources were: analyses of year-long foci, gameplans, field notes, and journal entries, and questionnaires. (Teachers were asked to describe their classroom implementations of their gameplans in journals.) The first four data sources were compared and synthesized into brief case studies. An across-case interpretation was compared with questionnaire data.

Study Findings and Discussion

Research Question #1: What interactions comprise Teacher Collegial Group meetings?

Table 1 indicates tabulation of interactions (as identified by teachers).

Table 1

Aggregate Compilation of Interactions for all Meetings

Meetings 2 - 9	Advice/ Suggestions	Encouragement	Support	Critique
#2	13	1	1	3
#3	14	1	2	1
#4	10	2	2	1
#5	13	0	0	1
#6	0	0	0	0
#7	12	2	0	0
#8	1	5	1	0
#9	11	2	3	1
Total:	74	13	9	7

A vast majority of the interactions identified by the teachers were advice/suggestions. (See Appendix A for definitions). There were 74 of these items for the meetings 2 - 9. There were 13 items for encouragement, 9 items for support, and 7 items for critique. (See Appendix B for Teacher Assessment Form.)

One might have hoped for more interactions involving critique, or interactions relating to "probing" and "challenging". Presumably, interaction characterized by these categories might result in teacher reflection and a greater willingness to change one's established

instructional patterns. There are several speculations for the preponderance of advice/suggestions. Teachers in the 1980s were under considerable pressure "to produce". This pressure comes from the state education agencies, parents, business leaders, and is often expressed in the form of state-mandated reform and evaluations. Faced with this outside pressure, teachers may unconsciously ban together and be hesitant to critique each other.

Second, on the Teacher Assessment Form examples of encouragement and advice/suggestions were given; critique was not. Teachers simply may have listed these interactions to match the examples given. Third, teachers were unfamiliar with the process of following a specific self-improvement procedure requiring a formulation of year-long foci and analysis of meeting to meeting gameplans. This process was new to these teachers, and it was the third meeting before interactions occurred more between the teachers than toward the facilitator. It was not until the fourth and fifth meetings that the meeting procedure really was clear and acceptable to the teachers.

Finally, the TCG process may be threatening to teachers. The researcher recalled his presentation to the entire school faculty. In referring to the year-long focus the researcher mistakenly used the term "objective". One teacher asked whether the participating teachers would be evaluated on that objective. This incident could give

speculation regarding teacher morale: Was there a hidden agenda for evaluation or was this really an oportunity for self-improvement?

Research Question #2: How might the teacher collegial group model be improved to maximize the professional development of teachers?

Given the nature of this exploratory study, the researcher intended to field test the TCG process. The meeting format was changed (the description not included in this study report) and a procedure implemented (at the seventh meeting). Given this question's field test purpose, this question's writeup often consisted of recommendations for readers interested in becoming TCG facilitators. (For brevity's sake, most of these recommendations were included in the comprehensive study report.)

The Meeting Format

Figure 1 contains the meeting format. In this format, the meeting started off with an informal sharing. This was important because teachers have had few opportunities to relate professionally. The purpose of this informal sharing was to make the group comfortable for the rest of the meeting and to give them an opportunity to share things of general interest.

GENERAL MEETING FORMAT FOR TEACHER COLLEGIAL GROUPS

John L. Keedy West Georgia College

(1) Informal sharing / Article critique
(12:30 - 1:10)

(2) Presentations (1:10 - 3:15)
*Minimum time per presentation (15 minutes)
*Break (20 minutes)
*Extra time for "run-overs" (15 minutes)

(3) Teacher assessments or journal writing
(15 minutes)

Each teacher selected and critiqued an article (ideally related to his/her year-long focus). This activity helped teachers differentiate critique (which relates to professional improvement) from criticism (which is a judgment, e.g., "You're a lousy teacher because you can't control a class"). Following the information sharing was the article critique. The presentations were given a total of 2 hours, 5 minutes, 1:10 - 3:15 p.m. This time block contained a minimum of 90 minutes: that is, 15 minutes per presenter, assuming there were 6 presenters. There was a 20 minute break after 2 presentations, and an extra 15 minutes for any run-overs. Sometimes the interactions were best when they ran over the 15 minute time period. It was impossible for the facilitator to "regulate" each presenter to 15 minutes: such an attempt to regulate runs counter to the culture of a teacher collegial group. Teachers were given 15 minutes at the end of the session to fill out their Teacher Assessment sheets or to write in their journals any potential ideas relating to their teaching gameplans. This fifteen-minute time allotment assured that the meeting ended promptly at 3:30, and it gave the teachers time to fill out their Teacher Assessment sheets before leaving for the day.

Interaction Among Group Members

During these first three meetings, the facilitator gradually steered the interactions away from being directed to himself and towards group members. Teachers initially

addressed comments and questions to the facilitator. The facilitator suggested several times that the contributions and interactions among the teachers in the group would determine the group's success.

The researcher analyzed the teacher interaction data to assess teacher group progress. Because there were so few items categorized as Critique, a procedure was implemented at the seventh meeting to increase this type of interaction. (Figure 2 contains this procedure.) This procedure outlines six specific steps that teachers might use in their presentations to increase critique interaction, or related categories.

Each presenter, who had approximately 15 minutes, started off with a clear statement of the gameplan formulated at the last meeting that he or she was going to work on between that meeting and the current meeting. Second, the presenter described, analyzed, and critiqued the implementation of that gameplan. For instance, if the teacher was working on learning centers, he or she might describe what went on during those learning centers. Then he or she could analyze what went well regarding that

Figure 2

ANALYSIS/CRITIQUE FORMAT FOR TCG PRESENTATIONS

John L. Keedy West Georgia College

(1) Statement of last meeting's Game-plan.

(2) Presentor description, analysis, and critique of Game-plan implementation.

(3) Peer observation analysis/critique.

(4) Group analysis/critique to identify assessment of Year-long Focus.

(5) Group advice/suggestions, encouragement, support for new Game-plan.

(6) Presentor formulation of new Game-plan.

particular gameplan for learning centers and what did not go well. In the critique, the presenter was attributing the successes and failures of a gameplan to himself or herself, such as "Perhaps I should have used only three gameplans. Perhaps I used gameplans too often. Perhaps I did not structure the learning centers well enough." Peer observations were reported in the third step (that began during the sixth meeting). In step four, group members helped the presenter assess his/her progress toward the year long focus. Were the gameplans consistent with each other? Did they relate to the year-long focus? (The facilitator might want to have an overhead transparency listing the year-long focus and gameplans up until that point for each presenter, so that the group can see the logical continuity of the gameplans.) In step five, the group used the above assessment to offer advice/suggestions and encouragement to the presenter. The presenter used this feedback to formulate a new gameplan to work on for the following meeting.

<u>Teacher Critique of the new procedure implemented during meeting #7 (data collected during the six post-project, teacher interviews)</u>

All teachers perceived that this procedure improved the overall quality of the meetings. Sample comments included:

1. "We had been stumbling over each other. Now we had an emphasis to spend less time on old gameplans and more time to set up new gameplans."
2. "[The procedure] ... made the order more specific. We tended to have less digression and we knew when we were done."
3. "The peer observation phase gave the presenter more of a chance to think about formulation of a new gameplan."
4. " Now we could keep the comments in the right order. Teachers were not as quick to jump in with advice. Teachers also could use note pads to write down their Advice/Suggestions and Critique to use during Phase 5 as they were listening to the teacher present.
5. [The procedure] was "easy to follow" and "detailed exactly what you had to do."
6. Several teachers believed that statement of the last meeting's gameplan at the beginning of each presentation was crucial. The teachers indicated that postponing their questions until Phase 5 was important because, otherwise, the presenter would not have the opportunity to explain the gameplan implementation.

The procedure implemented during meeting #7 increased the TCG process's efficiency and effectiveness. The teachers beleived that their time was used better under the new procedure: they also provided more structure for the

presentations. Items in the Critique category, however, did not increase during the last three meetings. A new group might be needed to assess the procedure's effect on group interactions. Possibly, group expectations for interactions had been "set" by the seventh meeting. See above for speculations about the paucity of Critique interactions during the course of the entire project.

Research Question #3: Did teachers -- as participants in Teacher Collegial Groups-- improve their instruction?

Study findings in this report were limited to brief analysis of year-long foci and gameplans, synopses of teacher self-improvements, and comparison of these synopses with questionnaire data. (The comprehensive report contains charted gameplans of all teachers -- as opposed to the one used in this report.)

Charting of Year-Long Focus and Gameplans

Not until the third meeting did all teachers formulate a year-long focus. They also experienced some difficulty in differentiating the focus from the the meeting-to-meeting gameplans. This difficulty is partly conceptual and may relate to the environment that teachers have in their classrooms. This teaching environment is generally fragmented, punctured, and hectic (Jackson, 1968). Members in the second meeting did not apparently believe it

necessary to interact or to help each other on the year-long focus or to differentiate that from their gameplan. No one spoke up and said, "You are confusing gameplan and year-long focus". This might have related to the norm that a teacher as a professional is responsible for his or her own classroom and everyone is on his or her own.

Two areas dominated teacher selection of year-long foci. The first related to classroom organization (e.g., pacing a classroom instruction and meeting the needs of students at either end of the learning rate spectrum--slow or fast). Becky, for instance, had two very fast students way ahead of the other twenty-five students. She used this problem as her year-long focus. (Table 2 contains the charting of Becky's gameplans.) The other general area of teacher inquiry was motivating students.

Synopses of Case Studies

Six case studies were used to synthesize data collected by follow-up interviews and teacher meeting assessment instruments, and analysis of field notes and meeting transcripts. Synopses of these case studies, including each teacher's year-long focus for these case studies follow.

Becky: To provide a more structured extension of assignments for her gifted children. The group members helped Becky set realistic expectations for her students' wide range of learning needs. Gifted students, she discovered, needed considerable structure and consistency.

Table 2

Charting of Gameplan Formulation - Becky

Year-long focus	Provide a more structured extension of assignments for my gifted children.
Gameplans	Meetings #2 - #8
#2	Start daily personal journal with two gifted students.
#3	Using more specific topics in personal journals.
#4	Vary assignments for gifted students so they don t get bored.
#5	Individualize activities for my male fast learner by using learning center games.
#6	Structure learning activities for gifted so that they do specific activities on each day.
#7	Use silent reading with bookworm to motivate individual study skills.
#8	Chart the amount of time spent with the gifted group. Try cooperative group with David and Amanda and work Laura in later.
#9	Continued with SSR and Bookworm.

Primary-age gifted/fast learners often lack independent work habits associated with older students. Essentially, she learned how to better use her time while meeting needs of regular students and fast learners.

Brenda: To incorporate cooperative learning circles into her combined 1-2 grade classroom. Brenda learned that implementing cooperative learning groups for primary-grade children was a perilous endeavor. After a few only moderately successful strategies, she discovered using pairs and then combining the most cooperative pairs into groups of fours. Convinced that she will use these groups next year, this teacher stated that "... it [TCGs] forced me to learn another way of teaching". The project "...was encouraging because I could listen to the interesting methods the other teachers used".

Debbie: To better use the state-mandated remedial education time with her reading groups. This teacher's journal and meeting transcripts contain several strategies used to meet state requirements to teach her remedial students and to teach "regular" students. One strategy was a creative rearrangement of desks to group the remedial students. At the fifth meeting Debbie implemented cooperative learning centers both to reduce the paperwork and to motivate her remedial students. ("I've been thinking of trying these centers for six years.") Debbie related that her colleagues influenced her to: (a) "ask herself continuously if she was

motivating students"; and (b) "encouraged her to do things differently that she would not have done without the group." She had always been willing to change her teaching: her TCG experience, however, gave her the opportunity to listen to "what was working well with the other teachers." "I sat at my desk less and was less of a 'traditional teacher'. I started 'teaching'. I planned more activities and gave out less worksheets."

Evelyn: To improve her students' vocabulary skills. In implementing strategies to increase her students' vocabulary skills, Evelyn learned not to expect 100% correct from all students. Her colleagues convinced her that this expectation was not practical ("Why beat your head against the wall?"). Also, varying strategies prevented students from becoming bored. Instead of overusing a particular vocabulary strategy, (while it was working) she decided to use four or five strategies mixing them up during a week's time. These strategies often worked best with smaller groups. (This overall strategy was especially true for this teacher's class this year. "It just happened to be a rather 'loud' class," observed a peer observer from the collegial group.) This teacher believed that the group helped her with the suggestions for strategies to try out with her class.

Randy: To encourage his students to read independently.

Randy revised his original year-long focus to use Sustained Silent Reading [SSR] during the fifth meeting. He spent the remaining meetings experimenting with implementation strategies: incentives encouraging student reading, and monitoring student progress to make sure students were actually reading the books. All but two of his approximately twenty-eight students read at least two books during his project. The group influenced this teacher to be more reflective on his teaching: "I didn't end up doing the same things all the time." He changed his teaching ("trying different things") and did not worry if they didn't work out because he had the support of his [respected] colleagues. The success of his sustained silent reading project is testimony to this teacher's willingness to try different strategies.

Kathy: To provide a smoother transition time as Special Education students enter and leave her classroom between 10:45 and 11:45. This special education teacher had students with different subject areas, handicapping conditions, and learning levels. Developing an efficient classroom management system enabled this teacher to stay with the students she was working with instead of being constantly interrupted as students entered and left her classroom. She learned to focus her efforts on one student at a time, to use the computer as an incentive for student

compliance to her management system, and to focus directly on one problem and to deal with it--before moving on.

Analysis of Questionnaire

The six teachers completed a questionnaire (Appendix C) to measure possible increased frequency of behaviors associated with teacher collegiality (based on the literature). Ideally, teachers should be influenced by their collegial interactions during TCG meetings to relate with each other and other teachers in their school in ways supporting teacher growth, reflection, analysis, and self-improvement. They even might have less of a tendency to form judgments of teacher competency and instead focus on specific effective teaching practices. Table 3 tabulates an increase or decrease between the pre-test, administered before the program started, and the post-test teacher responses, administered at the end of the program.

The six teachers' scores were averaged to yield mean pre- and post-treatment scores. The right column indicates an increase or decrease from the pre- to the post-treatment questionnaire. Two analyses were used. One analysis used significant increase/decrease relative to the five-point Likert scale. The second analysis was the t-test for correlated samples. Each teacher's pre- and post-treatment questionnaires were paired and then as a sample of six (n=6) compared to indicate significant differences.

Table 3

Pre-and-Post Treatment Questionnaire Analysis (Across-Group)

Questionnaire Item #	Pre-test	Post-test	+/-
1	2.8	2.3	-.5
2	3.3	4.0	.7
3	2.0	3.25	1.25
4	2.0	1.83	-.17
5	4.0	4.3	.3
6	4.0	4.3	.3
7	2.7	2.8	.1
8A	2.4	2.25	-.15
8B	2.4	2.0	-.4

Questionnaire Item #	Pre-test	Post-test	+/-
9	5 y 1 n	6 y 0 n	1 y
10	9.6	11.75	2.15
11	4.4	4.3	- .1
12	3.0	4.3	1.3
13	3.2	3.5	.3
14	5.0	4.8	-.2
15	2.8 2.5 4.5 2.5 2.5	3.2 3.3 2.8 2.5 3.5	.4 .8 -1.7 0 1.0
16	3.3	1.5	-1.3
17	3.2	1.5	-1.7
18	1.7	1.8	.1

Despite the assumptions about collegial interaction stated above, the questionnaire results were mixed. Inexplicably, discussion of teaching practices decreased from pre to post treatment (Item 1). Teacher peer observation also decreased --despite the facts that formal peer observation did not exist before the TCG program and that TCG participants observed each other during the program. These two items appear to be contradictory, since, if anything else, teacher discussion should have of increased if only because of the TCG process.

Several other items did not have increases at significance levels. Item 3 indicated a 1.25 increase in evaluative judgments of other teachers about teaching practices. Ideally, one would expect that increased collegial interaction among teachers could influence teachers in differentiating critique (suggestions for improvement necessitating change) and criticism (a judgment that a teacher is incompetent). Therefore, use of evaluative judgments among teachers should decrease. In the interview following the post-treatment questionnaire, teachers indicated that the increase in evaluative judgments might have been due to the use of the Georgia Teacher Observation Instrument that had been implemented during the 1988-89 school year. (This instrument provided a common vocabulary for administrators and teachers on effective

teaching practices.) Teachers, of course, were concerned about the use of this instrument and some teachers felt threatened by use of this instrument. Evaluation apparently is a common conversation topic and may have accounted for the increase--not the expected decrease--in evaluative judgments of teachers. On the t-test, Item 3 did not show a significant difference.

Several items, however, did show an increase. Item 12 indicated a 1.3 increase in the average amount of reflecting on a day's teaching. This increase is to be expected, because as teachers presented information on their gameplans during the TCG meetings they were, in effect, reflecting. Hopefully these data indicated that there is a carryover from the analysis and reflection done within the group to analysis and reflection done outside the group. The t-test did not indicate a significant difference.

Item 16 indicated a 1.3 decrease: disagreement with the statement "Changing your teaching is too difficult because you become used to a certain routine" increased from pre-treatment to post-treatment. This decrease may indicate that the collegial interactions of the six teachers made change less difficult because of the mutual support that the teachers perceived. This decrease was significant at only the .20 -.10 level.

Related to Item 16 was Item 17: "Changing teaching is too difficult because change risks loosing control of your

class." There was 1.7 more disagreement with this statement (i.e., a decrease of 1.7). This item indicated a t-test difference from pre-to-post treatment significant at the .05 level. Similar to Item 16, the mutual support and the suggestions generated by the group for each presenter may have made the teachers more confident and secure in making instructional strategy changes because specific ideas were offered by their peers. Possibly the more ideas offered by peers, the more peer pressure to try out and even implement these ideas in the classroom. Of course the nature of the teachers (experienced and secure in their class discipline and management) and the fact that they volunteered also may have influenced this score.

Summary

The findings to the third question were mixed but generally oriented towards the teacher self-improvement. Teachers identified a focus for their improvement efforts; and they formulated meeting-to-meeting gameplans with the advice/suggestions of their colleagues. Each teacher achieved considerable success with his/her year-long focus. They each implemented a new learning structure presumably having potential to improve student learning. Each teacher demonstrated a willingness to help each other and to benefit from the process of reflection and testing out of new ideas. (Transcript analysis indicated that each teacher received an average of eight suggestions for gameplans.) All teachers

observed their peers during this program. Questionnaire data implied that peer interaction had resulted in increased pedagogical reflection and a greater willingness to change teaching style. (A critique of the questionnaire instrument is included in Appendix D.)

Study Conclusion

With judicious planning and district/school-level support, teacher collegial groups can be successful. Teachers can help and learn from each other as they individually change and improve their teaching (in the context of the discussion of Question #3 findings). During this exploratory study, a meeting format and a procedure were developed which improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the TCG process. Teachers can improve through this TCG process: They can institute new strategies such as cooperative learning groups and learning centers, which they (hopefully) will continue to use in their classrooms.

Yet interaction categories like Critique, Probing, Challenging were not prevalent in this process. (The Critique frequency actually declined even after the new procedure was implemented.) Teachers initially found formulation of year-long foci and gameplans difficult. Some post-treatment questionnaire item data appeared to contradict other data. These data raise some questions about the difficulty of replacing the norms of cordiality

and autonomy with group experimentation and collegiality. Obviously implementation of a structure such as a TCG cannot reverse norms that have dominated the local school culture.

Longitundinal studies need to be conducted on the same group of teachers over several years to determine: 1) to what extent, if any, professional norms replace traditional (social) norms among teachers; and 2) whether student achievement improves in the classrooms taught by TCG teachers. More school improvement research also needs to be done on testing out the above meeting format/processes and different mixes of teacher participants--based on teacher self-motivation and attitudes-toward-change levels.

Implications for Instructional Supervisors

Despite the research that teachers receiving the most classroom feedback also are the most satisified with teaching,(e.g., Natriello, 1982), the overwhelming majority of school teachers receive little or no assistance (Natriello, 1982; Ellett & Garland, 1986). These findings pose a dilemma for instructional supervisors, who often have little time or too many teachers to supervise. For instance, according to Cole (1988) three fourths of our nation's schools have under 2,400 students. Many principals in our smaller schools may have no assistant principals and therefore are responsible for all administration and supervision. This phenomenon may now be even more extreme

because of the state-mandated teacher evaluation instruments. At the district level, subject-area supervisors may have as many as 300 or 400 teachers (personal communication with Ann McDuffie, district K-6 mathematics supervisor, Muscogee County, May, 1989).

Glickman (1990) suggested peer supervision or colleagueship (citing Alfonso & Goldsberry, 1982). If supervisors cannot provide direct assistance on a regular basis, then the choice is to have teachers provide help to each other or simply not offer the help. Teacher collegial groups may be one such strategy to provide forms of peer supervision for teachers. Supervisors can help establish these groups. When appropriate, they can be the group facililators. By using TCGs, supervisors can provide instructional assistance for many teachers who, presumably, can benefit from collegial interaction by a factor of six with each TCG. Supervisors then can provide direct assistance to other teachers.

Once supervisors have modeled TCGs and the process is accepted by each building's teachers, supervisors can work with principals to chose TCG group facililators from that staff. These faciltiators need to be chosen carefully. Some selection criteria are: 1) a knowledge of good instruction; 2) respect from their peers as instructional leaders; and 3) the ability to induce teachers to follow the TCG process but yet not appear to be a dominate personality

(personal communication with Sylvia Hartley, Director of Secondary Education, Carroll County Schools, Carrollton, Georgia, February 5, 1991). From a central office instructional supervisor perspective, facilitators may be best chosen by the principals with some suggestions about the above qualifications from the instructional supervisor. Judicious use of TCGs can "pyramid" and collegial interaction might become a school-wide norm.

TCGs also are an appealing structure because their training costs are low. This group was implemented at a cost of approximately $800.00 which included the substitutes that freed up these teachers for the nine meetings. Training can be provided through a one day package on communication skills, the process itself, and sample year long foci and gameplans relating to those foci. One day training is sufficient, provided the teachers are selected carefully. The majority of the teachers should probably be what Glickman (1990) called "superior teachers." These teachers are motivated by altruistic motivation: Their concern is improving instruction for all students and all schools; they are willing to take on schoolwide change and address larger issues of education and of the profession. One teacher selected might be a first-year teacher. (First-year teachers come in to the profession woefullly unprepared and in great need of support for "hands-on" strategies.) One participant may be a teacher in-need-of-assistance.

This teacher, however, should have a willing attitude to improve his or her instruction; otherwise a negative attitude could permeate the group and the norms of collegiality, experimentation and mutual asssistance, will be impaired.

References

Alphonso, R. J., & Goldsberry, L. F. (1982). Colleagueship in supervising. In T. J. Sergiovanni (Ed.), Supervision. Alexander, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Beach, D. M., & Reinhartz, J. (1989). Supervision: Focus on Instruction. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc.

Bruner, J. (1986). Actual minds, possible worlds. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Campbell, D. J., & Stanley, J. C. (1963). Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research. Chicago: R. McNally.

Clark, D. L., Lotto, L. J., & Astuto, T. A. (1984). Effective schools and school improvement: A comparative analysis of two lines of inquiry. Educational Administrative Quarterly, 20(3), 41-68.

Ellett, C. D., & Garland, J. S. (1986, April). Examining teacher evaluation practices and policies: Results from a national survey of the 100 largest school districts. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.

Eubanks, E., & Parish, R. (1987). An inside view of change in schools. Phi Delta Kappan, 68, 656-662.

Fullan, M. G. (1990). Staff development, innovation, and institutional development. In B. Joyce (Ed.) Changing school

culture through staff development, pp. 3-25. Alexandria, VA: Association for Curriculum and Supervision Development.

Gage, N. L. (1985). Hard gains in the soft sciences: The case of pedagogy. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Center on Evaluation, Development and Research.

Glickman, C. D. (1990). Supervision of Instruction. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Goodlad, J. I. (1984). A place called school. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Joyce, B. R., Hersh, R. H., & McKibbin, M. (1983). The structure of school improvement. New York: Longman, Inc.

Jackson, P. W. (1968). Life in classrooms. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Kelley, E. C. (1951). The workshop way of learning. New York: Harper.

Lambert, L. (1988). Staff Development Redesigned. Phi Delta Kappan, 69, 665-668.

Lambert, L. (1989). The end of an era of staff development. Educational Leadership, 47(1), 78-81.

Lieberman, A. (1988). Expanding the leadership team. Educational Leadership, 45(5), 4-8.

Natriello, G. (1982, March). The impact of the evaluation of teaching on teacher effect and effectiveness. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York.

Niles, J. A., & Lalik, R. V. (1985). New directions in reading teacher eduation. Paper presented at the annual convention of the International Reading Association, New Orleans, LA.

Rosenholtz, S. (1989). Teachers' workplace. New York: Longman, Inc.

Tom, A. R. (1985). Inquiring into inquiry-oriented teacher education. Journal of Teacher Education, 36(5), 35-44.

Walizer, M. E. (1986). The professor and the practitioners think about teaching. Harvard Educational Review, 56, 520-526.

Wiles, J. & Bondi, J. (1980). Supervision: A guide to practice. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill.

Appendix A

Categories of TCG Interactions

Advice/Suggestions: Recommendations for future teaching strategies that colleagues might want to adopt as possible gameplans.

Encouragement: Interactions reassuring and promoting teaching accomplishments of others.

Support: Empathy for teaching as challenging/exhausting work.

Critique: Non-judgmental advice/suggestions intended to help improve another s teaching but necessitating analysis and change by recipient.

Appendix B

Teacher Assessment Form

JOURNAL: Part I (description of TCG meeting)

Date of Meeting_____

(1) I identified a "gameplan" for working on my personal objective for the next meeting. If "yes", write it here.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(2) If your answer is "yes" state advice, support, encouragement, etc. received from colleagues:

(a) _____

_____

_____

_____

(b) _____

_____

_____

_____

(c) _____

_____

_____

_____

(3) If "no" give specific reasons below:

(a) _____

_____

_____

_____

(b) _____

_____

_____

_____

(c) _____

_____

_____

_____

(4) What things went well during today's meeting?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(5) What things did not go well during today's meeting?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

PRE-TREATMENT TCG QUESTIONNAIRE; 1989-90

John L. Keedy Ed.D. West Georgia College

DIRECTIONS: This questionnaire measures the effect of TCGs upon TCG members as they work both individually in their classrooms and as they work with their colleagues. Completing this questionnaire in the Fall will determine what you do on a daily basis before you participate in TCGs. The information obtained when you complete the same questionnaire in the Spring, 1990 will measure whether you now do more of these practices -- as a result of your participation in TCGs.

1. How frequently do you discuss teaching practices (e.g. managing class time to increase student achievement; better ways "to reach a certain kid better") with your colleagues outside of the TCG groups?

Based on annual amount. Check one answer:

(5) daily (approximately) _____
(4) daily to weekly _____
(3) approximately weekly _____
(2) moderately (six to 36 times thru school year) _____
(1) seldom (less than six) _____

Comment (only if necessary)_____

2. When listening to a colleague discussing teaching practices with you, approximately what percent of the time do you find yourself making critical judgments about your colleague (e.g. this teacher is incompetent; this teacher can't control his/her classroom).

Based on annual percent. Check one answer:

(5) 100% - 81% of time _____
(4) 80% - 61% of time _____
(3) 60% - 41% of time _____
(2) 40% - 21% of time _____
(1) 20% - 0% of time _____

Comment (only if necessary)_____

3. When you are <u>initiating</u> the discussion of teaching practices with a colleague, what percent of the time do you perceive that <u>your colleague</u> is making a critical judgment about yourself?

<u>Based on annual percent. Check one answer:</u>

(5) 100% - 81% of time _____
(4) 80% - 61% of time _____
(3) 60% - 41% of time _____
(2) 40% - 21% of time _____
(1) 20% - 0% of time _____

Comment (only if necessary)_____

4. How frequently does a discussion with a colleague influence you to change a teaching routine (for example: reviewing homework at beginning of class; lecture; students start on the next day's homework assignment based on teacher's lecture) established over several years?

<u>Based on annual amount. Check one answer:</u>

(5) daily (approximately) _____
(4) daily to weekly _____
(3) approximately weekly _____
(2) moderately (six to 36 times thru school year) _____
(1) seldom (less than six) _____

Comment (only if necessary)_____

5. How frequently do you <u>voluntarily</u> prepare teaching materials (i.e. handouts, lecture notes, transparencies) with your colleagues?

<u>Based on annual amount. Check one answer:</u>

(5) daily (approximately) _____
(4) daily to weekly _____
(3) approximately weekly _____
(2) moderately (six to 36 times thru school year) _____
(1) seldom (less than six) _____

Comment (only if necessary)_____

6. How often do you seek out the confidential advice of a trusted colleague when you are confronted with a curricular or instructional problem in your classroom?

Based on annual amount. Check one answer:

(5) daily (approximately) _____
(4) daily to weekly _____
(3) approximately weekly _____
(2) moderately (six to 36 times thru school year) _____
(1) seldom (less than six) _____

Comment (only if necessary)_____

7. How often do you voluntarily observe other teachers teaching (peer observation) for professional growth (excluding any observations required by the TCG or GTEP)?

Based on annual amount. Check one answer:

(5) daily (approximately) _____
(4) daily to weekly _____
(3) approximately weekly _____
(2) moderately (six to 36 times thru school year) _____
(1) seldom (less than six) _____

Comment (only if necessary)_____

8. How often do you find yourself reflecting on a crucial teaching decision -- excluding any reflection relating to TCG gameplans -- made previously during a school day?

Based on annual amount. Check one answer:

(5) daily (approximately) _____
(4) daily to weekly _____
(3) approximately weekly _____
(2) moderately (six to 36 times thru school year) _____
(1) seldom (less than six) _____

Comment (only if necessary)_____

9. Having reflected on that decision, what percent of the time do you follow up on that decision and do some thing different on the next day?

Based on annual percent. Check one answer:

(5) 100% - 81% of time _____
(4) 80% - 61% of time _____
(3) 60% - 41% of time _____
(2) 40% - 21% of time _____
(1) 20% - 0% of time _____

Comment (only if necessary)_____

_____

_____

10. You are most inclined to change your teaching practice when convinced that such a change will be successful with your students.

Based on your experience as a teacher. Check one.

(5) Strongly agree	(4) Agree	(3) Unsure	(2) Disagree	(1) Strongly disagree
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

11. Changing your teaching is too difficult because you've become used to a certain routine.

Based on your experience as a teacher. Check one.

(5) Strongly agree	(4) Agree	(3) Unsure	(2) Disagree	(1) Strongly disagree
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

12. Changing your teaching is too difficult because change risks losing control of your class.

Based on your experience as a teacher. Check one.

(5) Strongly agree	(4) Agree	(3) Unsure	(2) Disagree	(1) Strongly disagree
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

13. Teacher isolation and autonomy (You there to survive in your classroom) make me reluctant to share advice and support with other teachers.

Based on your experience as a teacher. Check one.

(5) Strongly agree	(4) Agree	(3) Unsure	(2) Disagree	(1) Strongly disagree
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

14. Rank order this question by using the 5-1 scale with 5 the highest.
You can learn best about improving your teaching from:

Teacher trainers/consultants	_____
College professors	_____
Teachers	_____
Administrators	_____
Professional Literature	_____

Appendix D

Critique of Instrument.

Appropriateness of using a questionnaire with six field testing participants may be questionable. In such a situation the field researcher might get to know each participant and use observation and an interview questionnaire as the primary methods of data collection. (Questionnaires, conversely, may be most appropriate to survey larger populations.) As an example, Item 1 (frequently discussing teaching practices with fellow teachers) showed a .5 decrease. In the interview after the post-treatment questionnaire was administered, the researcher discussed these data. Teachers were incredulous that this item reflected a decrease. (This incredulous reaction was corroborated by the follow-up interviews: Several teachers observed that interactions centering on teacher analysis, reflection, etc. of teaching increased partly because each participant knew the year-long foci and often the gameplans of their colleagues.) Hence, interaction, according to them, <u>increased</u> during this project. (Unfortunately the fact that the post-treatment questionnaire was completed 30 days <u>after</u> the last TCG meeting could have affected the post-treatment: Teachers might have no longer been influenced by collegial interaction, and their unpredicted interactions (in

cafeteria, faculty lounge, etc.) might have decreased. Also, the timing of the post-treatment questionnaire might have been an influence: In May (in the South) teachers are finishing up the school year, and they may have been preoccupied with closing out the year.

Despite pilot testing of this instrument, a design problem became evident with the administration of the post-treatment questionnaire. The questionnaire did not clarify whether it was measuring increases of certain behaviors by participants while they functioned during TCG meetings or indirectly as participants interacted with each other and with other teachers outside the group meetings. Obviously, the instrument was used to measure the later category of behaviors but the individual items did not specify this increase. Measuring only increase of interactions within the group is of questionable validity because the TCG meeting format and the procedures per se required teachers to interact in ways that encourage reflection and analysis. The issue is whether the influence of the collegial interactions spread to teachers as they interact outside group meetings when they are not required to follow TCG format and procedure. The design of the items did not differentiate between these two general categories.